



Rees Centre



# How do we know if children's social care services make a difference?

## Development of an outcomes framework

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#CSCoutcomes

# The study

- Development of an outcomes framework for CSCS: to provide better evidence for those planning and delivering the service
- It is designed to complement, not replace, existing data collection
- Developed using a bottom-up approach, based on consultations with local authority staff and children/ families as well as existing evidence
- If it proves useful, it could be the first step towards a more cohesive approach to understanding how to improve children's outcomes
- A big **THANK YOU** to the
  - **Nuffield Foundation** for funding us
  - The **advisory group** for challenging and supporting us all the way
  - The **children, parents and carers** who told us what mattered to them
  - The **case study local authorities** who gave up their time to speak to us
  - **All those who commented** on the emerging findings

# Developing an outcomes framework

- **User outcomes:** what changes for users are expected from services?
- **Intermediate outcomes:** how can these changes be achieved?



# How CSCS can make a difference

Socio-economic and cultural context

Corporate commitment and support for CSCS

Role of other agencies

Leaders create the conditions and culture that support good social work practice

CSCS reach children and families who need support and offer them the level of support they are entitled to

Relationship based practice that values children and families and involves them in identifying the support they need

Children in need:  
- Are safe where they live  
- Are supported to be healthy and happy  
- Are supported to enjoy and progress in education

Learning from the experiences of staff, children and families

**Four types of data to measure intermediate and child outcomes**

Data about the organisation, workforce and practice

'Snapshot' and trend data on cohort of service users

Data on users' views and experience of services and self-reported impacts

Data on progress of individual children re: safety, wellbeing, healthy development and education

**Intermediate outcomes**

# The 'right' conditions and culture

Effective leadership

Commitment to SW values and ethics

Culture that supports reflective learning

Effective multi-agency working

Adequate support infrastructure

Shared understanding of good practice

Stable workforce at all levels

Motivated workforce

Workforce with the right skills

# Services reach children and families who need help

Partner agencies are able to identify children who are potentially in need

Effective identification of children in need

Effective identification of children at risk of harm

Effective identification of children who cannot be cared for safely at home

Level of support is appropriate to meet a child's needs

Care leavers remain in contact and continue to receive support

# Children and families are valued and involved

Children trust staff and have a stable and supportive relationship with them

Children involved in identifying their needs and planning their support

Children think services are responding to their needs

Parents/carers trust staff and have a stable and supportive relationship with them

Parents/carers involved in identifying their needs and planning their support

Parents/carers think services are responding to their needs

# Child outcomes

# Children:

Are safe where they live

Are settled and happy where they live

Achieve stability and permanence

Have a healthy development

Have their mental health needs met

Engage in early education

Engage in education

Have stable and positive educational experiences

Make good progress in education

# Making sense of the data

- **Robust statistical evidence** to challenge assessments based on data which do not measure child outcomes nor important intermediate outcomes
- **Triangulation:** none of the statistics that can be developed from the framework are designed to be used in isolation. No single statistic can capture the complexity in which CSCS operate and the support they deliver to some of the most vulnerable children and families in our society

# Making sense of the data – some examples

- Analysis can raise important questions about the **role of partner agencies**
- Data on outcomes could be linked to **financial data**
- Explore the influence of **socio, economic, demographic and cultural factors**
- Explore outcomes for **children with different needs** and accessing different services
- **Benchmarking** to get a sense of what kind of improvements local CSCS should expect if their involvement has worked
- Assess CSCS **performance** at different stages of their improvement journey

**Next steps**

# Piloting the framework – overarching plans

- Work with a small number of local authority CSCS
  - Importance of the inclusion of authorities with different approaches to the use of data (recognition of capacity and capability issues)
  - Test and develop the framework to ensure it is of use for local and regional strategic and operational purposes
  - Draw on existing learning about the development and implementation of frameworks and tools
- Nationally applicable
  - Department for Education
  - Ofsted
  - WW CSC

# Piloting the framework - specifics

- Assess the validity and reliability of existing outcome indicators
- Develop new outcome indicators using existing data
- Assess the suitability of existing tools to collect data on the features of the organisation, social work practice and workforce
- Develop and test a tool to collect data from children and families
- Consider the ethical and methodological challenges involved in collecting data from CSCS users
- Collect and analyse data on intermediate and child outcomes and explore if and how the analysis helps to make better informed decisions

# Small group discussions

- What are the main considerations in designing the pilot phase?
  - Have we missed anything?
  - What might be the barriers and facilitators to the implementation and uptake of the framework?
    - How might we mitigate the barriers?
    - How can we build momentum?
- Are there others who we should be including in the pilot phase?

# Project report

La Valle I, Hart D, Holmes L with Pinto V

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<http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/research/measuring-outcomes-for-childrens-social-care-services/>

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